THE PAUPER OF PARK LANE

By WILLIAM Le QUEUX.

CHAPTER XXIII—Continued.

At last she spoke, saying in a low, rather strained voice:

"I can hardly answer that question. Had I suspected anything unusual I think I should have mentioned my apprehension to you."

"Yes, I feel sure you would have done so, dearest," he declared. "I quite see the difficulty of your present position. And you understand, I'm quite sure, how anxious I feel regarding the safety of the doctor, who was such a dear friend of mine."

"But why are you so anxious, Max?" she asked.

"Because if—well, if there had not been foul play, I should have heard from the doctor before this!" he said seriously.

"Foul play?" she gasped, starting forward. "Do you suspect some—some tragedy, then?"

"Yes, Marion," was his low, earnest reply. "I do."

"But why?" she queried. "Remember that the doctor was a diplomat and statesman. In Servia politics are very complex, as they are, I'm told, in every young nation. Our own English history was a strange and exciting one when we were the present age of Servia. The people killed King Alexander, it is true; but did we not kill King Charles?"

"Then you think that some political undercurrent is responsible for this disappearance?" he suggested.

"That has more than once crossed my mind."

"Yet would he not have sent word to me in secret?"

"No. He might fear spies. You yourself have told me how secret agents swarm in the Balkan countries, and that espionage is as bad there as in Russia."

"But we are in London—not in Servia."

"There are surely secret agents of the Servian Opposition party here in London!" she said. "You were telling me something about them once—some facts which the doctor had revealed to you."

"Yes, I remember," he remarked thoughtfully, feeling that in her argument there was much truth. "Yet I have a kind of intuition of the occurrence of some tragedy, Marion," he added, recollecting how her brother had stolen in secret from that denuded house.

"Well, I think, dear, that your fears are quite groundless," she declared. "I know how the affair is worying you, and how much you respected the dear old doctor. But, if I were you, I would wait in patience. He will surely send you word some day from some remote corner of the earth. Suppose he had sailed for India, South America, or South Africa, for instance? There would have been no time for him to write to you from his hiding place."

"Then he is in hiding—eh?" asked Max, eager to seize on any word of hers that might afford a clew to the strange statement of Maud.

"He may be."

"Is that your opinion?"

"I suspect as much."

"Then you do not believe there has been a tragedy?"

"I believe only in what I know," replied the girl with wisdom.

"And you know there has not been a tragedy?"

"Ah! no. There you are quite mistaken. I have no knowledge whatsoever."

"Only surmise?"

"Only surmise."

"Based upon what Maud told you—eh?" he asked at last, bringing the conversation to the point.

"What Maud told me has nothing whatever to do with my surmise," was her quick reply. "It is a surmise, pure and simple."

"And you have no foundation of fact for it?"

"None, dear."

Max was disappointed. He sat smoking, staring straight before him. At the tables around, beneath the trees, well-dressed people were chatting and laughing in the dim light, while the military band opposite played the newest waltz. But he heard it not. He was only thinking of how he could clear up the mystery of the strange disappearance of his dearest friends. He glanced at the soft face of the sweet girl at his side, that was so full of affection and yet so sphinx-like.

She would tell him nothing. Again and again she had refused to betray the confidence of her friend.

For the thousandth time he reflected upon that curious and startling incident which he had seen with his own eyes in Cromwell road, and of the inexplicable discovery he had made. He had not met Rolfe. That he should keep away from him was, in itself, suspicious. Without a doubt he knew the truth.

Max wondered whether Charlie had told his sister anything—whether he had told her the truth, and the reason of her determination not to speak was not to incriminate him. He knew in what strong affection she held her brother—how she always tried to shield his faults and magnify his virtues. Yet was it not only what might be very naturally supposed that she would do? Charlie was always very good to her. To him, she owed practically everything.

And so he pondered, smoking in silence, while the band played and the after-dinner idlers gossiped and flirted on that dimly-lit lawn. He pondered when later on he took her to Oxford street by the "tube," and saw her to the corner of the street in which Cunnington's barracks were situated, and he pondered as he drove along Piccadilly to the Traveler's to have a final drink before going home.

Next morning, about 11, he was in his pleasant bachelor sitting-room in Dover street going over some accounts from his factory up in Scotland, when the door opened and Charlie Rolfe entered, exclaiming in his usual hearty way:

"Hulloa, Max, old chap! How are you?"

Barclay looked up in utter surprise. The visit was entirely unexpected, and so intimate a friend was Rolfe that he always entered unannounced.

In a moment, however, he recovered himself.

"Why, Charlie," he exclaimed, motioning him to a low easy chair on the other side of the fireplace, "you're quite a stranger. Where have you been all this long time?"

"Oh! I thought you knew through Marion. I've been up in Glasgow. Had a lot of worries at the works—labor trouble and all that sort of thing," he replied. "Those Scotch workmen are utterly incorrigible, but I must say that it's due to agitators from our side of the border."

"Yes; I saw something in the papers the other day about an impending strike. Have a cigar?" and he pushed the box toward his friend.

"There would have been a strike if the old man hadn't put his foot down. The men held a meeting and reconsidered their position. It's well for them they did, otherwise I had orders to close down the whole works for six months—or for a year, if need be."

"But you'd have lost very heavily, wouldn't you?"

"Lost? I should rather think so. We should have had to pay damages for breach of contract with the Italian railways to the tune of a nice round sum. But what does it matter to the guv'nor. When he takes a stand against what he calls the tyranny of labor he doesn't count the cost."

"Well," sighed Max, looking across at Marion's brother, "it's rather nice to be in such a position, and yet——"

"And yet it isn't all honey to be in his shoes—eh? No, Max, it isn't," he said. "I know more about old Sam than most men, and I tell you I'd rather be as I am than stifled by wealth as he is. He's a millionaire in gold, but a pauper in happiness."

"I can't help thinking that his unhappiness must, in a great measure, be due to himself," Max remarked, wondering why Charlie had visited him after this length of time. "I think if I had his money I should try and get some little enjoyment out of it. Other wealthy men have yachts, or motor cars, or other hobbies. Why doesn't he?"

"Because he doesn't care for sport. He told me once that in his younger days abroad he was as keen a sportsman as anybody. But now-a-days he's too old for it, and prefers his arm-chair."

"And yet he isn't a very old man, is he?"

"Sometimes wealth rejuvenates a man, but more often the worry of it ages him prematurely," Rolfe remarked. "I only got back from Glasgow again last night, and I thought I'd look in and see you. Seen Marion lately?"

"I was with her at Earl's court last night. She's all right."

Then a silence fell between the pair. Rolfe lit the cigar he had been slowly twisting between his fingers. Max looked furtively into his friend's face, trying to read what secret thought lay behind. Charlie, however, preserved his usual easy, nonchalant air as he leaned back in his chair, his weed between his teeth and his hands clasped behind his head.

"Look here, Charlie," Max exclaimed at last, in a tone of confidence. "I want to ask you something."

The other started visibly, and his cheeks went just a trifle paler.

"Well, go on, old chap." He laughed uneasily. "What is it?" And then he held his breath.

"It's about old Statham."

"About old Statham!" the other echoed, breathing freely again.

"Yes. Do you know that there are going about London a lot of queer stories regarding that house of his in Park lane—I mean a lot more stories."

"More stories!" laughed the private secretary. "Well, what are people saying now?"

"Oh, all sorts of weird and ridiculous things."

"What is one of them? I'm interested, for they never tell me anything."

"Because they know you to be connected with the place," Max remarked. "Well, just now there are about a dozen different tales going the rounds, and all sorts of hints against the old man."

"Set about by those with whom he has refused to associate—eh?"

"Probably concocted by spiteful gossips, I should think. Some of them bear upon the face of them their own refutation. For instance, I've heard that the reason lights are seen upstairs is because there's a mysterious Mrs. Statham and her family living there in secret. Nobody has seen them, and they never go out."

"Oh! And what reason is given for that?"

"Because they say she's a Turkish woman, and that he still keeps her secluded as she has been ever since a child. The story goes that she's a very beautiful woman, daughter of one of the most powerful pashas in Constantinople, who escaped from her mother's harem and got away over the frontier into Bulgaria, where Statham joined her, and they were married in Paris."

Rolfe laughed aloud. The idea of old Sam being an actor in such a love romance was distinctly amusing.

"They call him Statham Pasha, I suppose! Well, really, it is the very latest, just as though there may not be lights upstairs when the old man goes to bed."

"Of course," said Max. "But the fact that the old man refuses to allow anybody in the house has given rise to all these stories. You really ought to tell him."

"What shall I tell him? Is there any other gossip?"

"Yes," replied Max, looking the secretary straight in the face in suspicion that he knew more about the mysteries of that house than he really did. "There's another strange story, which I heard two or three days ago, to the effect that one night recently a person was seen to go there secretly, being admitted at once. Then, after the lapse of an hour or so, old Levi came forth, signaled to a four-wheeled cab which was apparently loitering about on the chance of a fare. Then from out of the house was carried a long, heavy box, which was placed on the cab and driven away to an unknown destination."

"A box!" gasped Rolfe in surprise, bending quickly across to the speaker. "What do you mean—what do you suggest?"

"Well, the natural suggestion is that the body of the midnight visitor was within that box!"

Charlie Rolfe did not reply. He sat staring open-mouthed, as though Max's story had supplied the missing link in a chain of suspicions which had for a long time existed in his mind—as though he now knew the terrible and astounding truth.

TO BE CONTINUED TO-MORROW.

HUMANISMS

A distant friend is one you can't "touch."

Ever see a boaster looking for a chance to make good?

Nature seldom hides a massive brain behind a pretty face.

Say the right thing at the right time and some fool will envy you.

It must be a great relief to some men when their wives become widows.

The man with a wife and several grown daughters seldom hoards his money.

How a woman does enjoy seeing a man fool himself thinking he's fooling her!

The average man will stand without hitching a good deal better than if tied with an apron string.

Ever notice that almost every one you talk with gives you some information that isn't of any earthly use to you?

FROM WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW

Good table manners are about as good an asset as man or woman can acquire. No matter how clever a person may be, it counts for little if the test at table cannot be successfully passed. Neither good looks nor pretty clothes will make one oblivious of sins of omission in the none too pleasing spectacle at best—of feeding.

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I will prove it to you by a story which has soured the temper of two women and done other mischief in addition. A fashionable dressmaker who had secured her position by Scotch thrift and obstinacy in fighting difficulties, decided that she ought to do something fine for her young sister in Scotland. So she went over to inspect the girl and found her extremely pretty and well-formed. She dressed her in harmony with her good looks and brought the girl over to the city of millionaires where she herself had prospered.

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Then she looked about for the rich man who was to turn the Cinderella into a princess, and found him in a rather gay bachelor, bald-headed and plain, but popular by reason of his generosity and charm of manner. He had but to see the girl to become interested in her, and a luncheon over which her aunt presided and to which a few of his closest friends were invited was given to emphasize his interest. The place chosen was the most fashionable hotel in the city, and the aunt saw that the gowns of the pair fitted the occasion.

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The girl was hopelessly ignorant of the niceties of refined eating. She had been brought up where nothing was known of them, and neither beauty nor fine apparel were compensations for the dreadful things she did that day. The host watched her in fascinated horror, which both women misconstrued into admiration, therefore their disappointment at the sudden disappearance of the millionaire, who found it necessary to take an immediate and long-protracted journey, was keen. I imagine they never discovered the cause of his sudden coolness, for they were conscious of no shortcomings.

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The fine points in social etiquette of all kinds none but society folk can hope to master. They require time and practice and are not worth a busy person's attention. But there are fundamental principles like those of education, the alphabet of good manners, and no family is too humble to observe them. The proper use of napkin, knife, fork, and spoon should be as familiar as reading, and in these simple matters are found most of the mistakes which make men and women undesirable table companions. There are other faults, like making noises with the mouth, both in eating and drinking, and picking the teeth in public. It is surprising to see so many offenders in the latter class. They are met about everywhere nowadays. BETTY BRADEEN.

PHYSICAL CULTURE ADVICE

"Look a your back, madam," said the physical culturist.

"You want to be beautiful. It is impossible while you have that lump just above your shoulder blades and a hollow below your waist line.

"We judge all our applicants by their backs. Most women who aren't actually so thin that their shoulder blades stick out have fatty degeneration of the back. The back of the moment is a single long curve from the neck to the hem of the gown. Yes, your dressmaker can help you. You must ask her what to do, but if you take treatment of me you must eat less and go into the reduction class.

"It isn't all in the shape of the back, though. A poor hairline will spoil the most careful cultured back imaginable. It's human nature to see the defects, you know, and the casual observer who sees you from behind will glue his eyes to your scolding locks, though your shoulders formed the most wonderful curve in the world.

"That's why we have a hairdressing department. We teach women how to comb their own hair so that it won't look as if it would fall down before an evening is over. Did you ever think how many more people have a chance to stare at the back of your head than at your face? In the theater, think what close inspection your back hair gets. Yet many a girl will gleefully comb her front pompadour, feel of her back hair, run a slide or a pin in crooked, and depart for the matinee without an idea of how the back of her head really looks.

"Then there's the dress itself, with its fastenings. Few women realize that fastenings which are in perfect position for one person won't do at all for another. You have a trick, for instance, of raising your shoulder blades now and then, which means that you ought to have an extra invisible fastening just at that point.

"Ah, the sins of the lingerie waist, with its rows of carelessly sewed buttons, or places where buttons ought to be! I hate tailored clothes for women, but I'm glad of the tailored waist for the one reason that it buttons up the front where it will get its due amount of attention.

"When I start to train a woman, I make her stand between two tall mirrors and inspect her own back every time she comes here. Usually I find her trying to pull her skirt around into place before I see it, or rubbing up a scolding lock or two, but then I remind her that I am supposed to represent the average person who sees her during the day, when she isn't thinking about her appearance. Combing up scolding locks is dressing-room work, and shouldn't be done on the street.

"No woman can expect to be beautiful these days when lines, the lines of figure and drapery, are the whole art of looking well, unless she leaves her room with full confidence in her back. If she suspects a single pin of giving way or feels that her shoulder blades are fat, she will hitch around and fuss with herself till everybody else knows it, too. She must think of those things when she dresses.

"For the day of paper-doll beauty, when we painted our faces, made huge front pompadours and trimmed the fronts of our waists, leaving the backs to be merely comfortable, is over."

DRAPERIES FOR LENTEN SEWING.

There is little excuse to keep up heavy drapery to catch the dust and suffer from the hot sun. Nowadays, charming materials for curtains and portieres can be bought at prices within the reach of all.

Madras, for instance, has rarely been lovelier than in the new designs that are being shown. The Oriental colorings are much used on cream or ecru grounds, and the designs are conventional, many of them with a decided Egyptian tendency.

A favorite color combination is dark or French blue, Pompeiian red and orange; others combine vivid green, the new peacock blues and yellow, while still others seem to blend the color range of the rainbow harmoniously.

These curtains are used effectively both in doorways and at windows, especially in living rooms, yet keep out none of the needful breezes.

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English chintzes, cretonnes, and linen taffeta also lend themselves to summer decoration. Many women who do not care for the heavy window shrouding of winter make straight curtains of these materials reaching to the window sill and put on the outer frame, and do away with the sash curtain entirely.

In bedrooms, especially, these curtains are useful, as, being divided in the center and running loosely on rods, they can be hung in narrow lines at each side of the window to give a touch of color to the room, yet shut out neither light nor air.

If the coloring of the walls is plain the curtains should be in floral design repeating the predominant tone of the room. On the other hand, if flowered papers are used the curtains should be in a plain color.

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One charming bedroom that has been recently fitted up in a Georgetown house had a paper covered with trailing nasturtiums in shades of yellow and orange. The casement windows were hung with short curtains of cotton taffeta, which is alike on both sides, so does not require lining, in a shade of green that toned in with the nasturtium leaves.

These curtains were finished in a three-inch hem at the bottom, and the selvedges at the sides were covered with narrow, dull gold galloon. This was sewed on by hand so that it might be easily ripped off should the curtains need washing.

The same material was used to cover an old-fashioned winged chair, and was made into a table cover embroidered across the ends in a conventional nasturtium border.

Sash curtains of square filet net in ecru tint were finished with a two-inch hem all around.

The toilet set was of dull green crockery, almost the shade of the taffeta, while the white enamel writing table was equipped in a hammered brass.

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Another room in this same house, where the walls were paper in cream-colored, self-toned stripes, paneled at every corner with red rambler roses, had the drapery and couch cover of English chintz in a rose design that almost matched the paneling.

Where opaque curtains are not liked the windows are softened by square-meshed net sash curtains, or with those of thin net, either made plain, or edged with narrow Cluny lace put on flat to the sides and across the bottom.

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For simple bedroom curtains nothing is prettier than sheer dotted or figured swiss. Sometimes these are edged with a ratner scant ruffle of the material, plain or edged with narrow lace, again the three-inch hem is applied to the curtain with a line of half-inch beading, which gives a dainty finish.

Women who like to do Lenten sewing would find a set of these summer curtains pleasant and easy work.

The white or ecru net sash curtains finished with a narrow hem all around and edged with cotton ball fringe are also easily made by hand or machine.

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Be careful in measuring curtains to do it accurately, always allowing for shrinking. Also be certain that you are not making them up for different sides of the window. One ambitious young housekeeper with more zeal than judgment, recently cut out and made a dozen pairs of sash curtains for her new house, only to find when the task was completed that all were for the same side of the window.

It is not necessary to get expensive materials for curtaining to have good effects; some of the cheap cretonnes and madras are now to be found in most artistic coloring.

A Picturesque Little Guimpe Dress.

4316

One of the daintiest of the new frocks for small girls is here sketched. It will be seen at a glance that it is rather out of the ordinary, being made in a charming pinafore effect, with square neck and wide armholes, for wear over a guimpe of contrasting material, the guimpe being included in the pattern. The dress has a single box-pleat on either side of the front and back, and falls in straight unbroken lines from the pretty yoke bands to the hem, the front being gathered slightly across the chest. The frock is suitable for making in any of the soft-draping gabrics, China silk, crepe de chine, nun's veiling, or a sheer lingerie material being equally appropriate. To make it in the five-year size requires 1⅝ yards of 24-inch goods for the guimpe and 3 yards of the same width for the dress. Seven sizes, two to eight years.

This pattern may be obtained by inclosing 10 cents in stamps and addressing Pattern Department, The Washington Herald, 734 Fifteenth street northwest, giving the number (4316) and size wanted.

A Remedy for the Ice-box Odor.

The sole means of eliminating the characteristic ice-box odor is washing out with soap and water, to which some chloride of lime has been added, says Werkstatt. After thorough drying and airing, the white deposit that appears on the zinc lining must be rubbed off with emery paper. This is a tiresome job, and if frequently repeated soon wears out the sheet metal covering. But as a thorough cleansing, for a single occasion, the process is attended with satisfactory results.

Trouble Ahead.

From Illustrated Bits.

"Yes," said Marryat, "I'm pretty busy. Getting ready for my wedding, you know."

"Ah!" remarked Henpeck, "that's a reminder of what the philosopher said."

"What's that?"

"'In time of peace prepare for war.'"

Money Matters and Marriage.

If girls would only exercise common sense when discussing the future with prospective partners and dispose of money matters before marriage, they would escape a world of discomfort. It is a mystery why any woman should feel hesitation in finding out on what sum she is expected to dress and pay her little personal expenses. If she has a father, it is his place to learn what income his future son-in-law can command; how much he has in savings and the amount of his debts. The lack of a father places this duty upon a mother's shoulders, and when a girl has to decide her own future she should do it in as business-like a manner as she would discuss wedding details.

A wife who is ignorant of her husband's financial affairs occupies a difficult position. She never knows if she is justified in any expense even for her home. If her husband has not begun his new life by placing her above the humiliation of asking for money for her needs, she is bound to wear herself out in dread of refusal of such requests. Each passing year increases the discomfort of her position, and if hard times descend upon them it will find her unequal to the struggle. It is not sordid in the least to discuss money matters before marriage—why, money is as much a necessity as food, since it is needed for the purchase of that and every other thing we need.

WHIMS IN MILLINERY

One of the very latest fads is the wreath of sparrows, which, in submission to millinery magic, has renounced the somber brown of its plumage, and now wears brilliant hues that might do honor to a cockatoo. Another novelty even more striking is that of introducing among the feathery grasses of the new hats sprigs upon which are poised shimmering little humming birds.

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The traditional languor of the ostrich plume has this year been reformed into a sprightly erectness. In order to produce the height which is the ne plus ultra of the new hats, the plumes are now stiffened with fine silk wire. The ostrich feather has further forsaken its original character by consenting to be cut and used as a pompon which forms the base of stiff effects in aigrette and heron.

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Natural owl's wings are much used this year. All wings occur in pairs of three or four, often in varying tints, and overlap each other.

What She Would Get.

From Tit-Bits.

Some weeks ago the wife of Judge Blank, of Pacific avenue, lost her cook, and since she had no other resource, she rolled up her sleeves and for a week provided such meals as the judge had not enjoyed since those happy days when the Blanks did not keep a cook. The judge's delight was so great that by way of appreciative acknowledgment he presented Mrs. Blank with a beautiful ermine cloak. Quite naturally, the incident was a good deal noised about among the social acquaintances of the Blanks, and a spirit of envious emulation was developed in certain quarters. It was in this mood that Mrs. J—— recited the story to her husband.

"What do I get, Jerry?" she asked, "if I will do the cooking for a week?"

"Well," said Mr. J——, "at the end of a week, my dear, you'll get one of those long crepe veils."